DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 932 IR 018 494

AUTHOR	Mueller, Jon
TITLE	A New Hire Training Program for the "Old" and the "New."
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	8p.; In: Association of Small Computer Users in Education (ASCUE) Summer Conference Proceedings (30th, North Myrtle Beach, SC, June 7-12, 1997); see IR 018 473.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Computer Networks; Employee Attitudes; Higher Education; Information Technology; *Local Area Networks; *On the Job Training; Professional Development; Program Development; Program Implementation; *Staff Development
IDENTIFIERS	*North Central College IL

ABSTRACT

In January of 1996, North Central College (Naperville, Illinois) turned on its campus-wide, PC-based network. A Technology Training Group (TTG) was created; this group focused on technology training for new staff hires, while also considering the ongoing needs of the current employees. Goals of the TTG included bringing new employees quickly up to date on the most essential applications on the network; welcoming the new employees into the campus community; using in-house presenters; creating a flexible format that allowed for adaptation of changing needs and that served the largest segment of current faculty and staff possible; and following the model established with technology support to provide a variety of means and opportunites for training. With these goals as guides, the TTG developed a three-part training program, which consisted of: (1) immediate training provided by the new employee's supervisor; (2) a monthly "Training Day" set aside to take new hires beyond the basics; and (3) an orientation day to welcome the new employee which included a tour of the campus. Feedback sheets seent to particpants about a week after the sessions revealed consistent appreciation for the new program. Suggestions were also received in terms of modifying the schedule and adding specific topics. The New Employee Technology Training Checklist for Supervisors is appended. (AEF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

A New Hire Training Program for the "Old" and the "New"

Jon Mueller
Associate Professor of Psychology
Technology Implementation Coordinator
North Central College
Naperville, IL 60566
Voice: (630) 637-5329
Fax: (630) 637-5121
jfm@noctrl.edu

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C.P. Singer
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

ED 410 932

IR 018494

Background

In January of 1996, North Central College turned on its campus-wide, PC-based network. The voice, video, and data infrastructure was in place, classrooms, dorm rooms and offices were all connected, and computers were on the desktop of virtually all full-time faculty and staff. This completed what our new Dean of Faculty dubbed "Phase 1."

Phase 2, the meaningful use of the new network, was now beginning. A month or so prior to the network's opening day and for a few months afterwards, faculty and staff were provided with classes on the most essential software on the network including navigating the network and Windows 3.11, e-mail and the word processor (Microsoft Word). Additionally, beginning the summer of 1996, I was appointed to a newly-created position -- Technology Implementation Coordinator (TIC). In this role, I would collaborate with the Director of Technology Support Services, Juliet Oeffinger, the Director of the Library, Carolyn Sheehy, and others to facilitate a successful implementation.

One of the first actions I took as TIC was to create a Technology Training Group (TTG) composed of myself (convener), Carolyn Sheehy (Director of Library Services), Heather Jagman (Instructional Services Librarian), Sharon Nelson (Systems Administrator), Betty Roth (Director of Non-Credit Programs), Marlene Starzyk (Secretary, Career Development Center), and Karen Mac Gregor (Employee Benefits Assistant). The TTG surveyed the current training and support efforts on campus to determine where its efforts would be best put to use initially. We noted that other than the wave of classes accompanying the start of the new network, technology training had not been conducted systematically or regularly. Moreover, new employees were often left to fend for themselves as they tried to acclimate to their new environment and the new technology. Intraoffice training was often inconsistent and insufficient as it was often difficult to carve out time for peer tutoring.

On the other hand, technology support was quite good and prevalent. An albeit overworked help desk was in place. Books on each of the key applications were purchased for each office. Some very good computer-based tutorials were on the network. Electronic users groups were established for each of the key applications.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Yet, before new employees could know what questions to get support for, they had to be brought up to speed on the new technology and become familiar with our network. Some training for new faculty beginning in the fall was already being planned as part of a regular orientation program. No such training or orientation was available for new staff. Consequently, the TTG decided to focus a good deal of its initial energies on technology training for new staff hires, but without forgetting the ongoing needs of the "old" or current employees.

New Hire Training Program

In creating a program to familiarize new staff with the network and to integrate them more fully into the college, the TTG identified several goals it wanted to meet. First, we wanted to bring new employees up to speed quickly on the most essential applications on the network. Second, we wanted to go beyond training to make the new employee feel welcome and a part of our campus community. Third, we sought to primarily use in-house talent as presenters. Not only was it cheaper, but we wanted to create a greater sense of community as we taught each other and took advantage of different strengths and interests among the staff and faculty. Fourth, we wanted to create a flexible format that would allow us to adapt to changing needs and serve as large a segment of the current faculty and staff as possible. Fifth, we wanted to follow the model established with technology support to provide a variety of means and opportunities for training.

Following these goals as guides, the TTG developed a three-part program we called the New Hire Training Program. The first component of the program, for want of a better title, was labeled the "First Day at Work." Given that our work has become increasingly dependent on information technology, new employees need immediate training as soon as they start their jobs. The best place for that to occur is at the location where the employees work. Thus, we proposed that the new employee's supervisor be responsible for insuring that within the first day or two on the job that the new hire be taught a common list of essential skills such as logging in and out of the network, changing passwords, sending and replying to e-mail, using the voice mail system, etc. (See Appendix A.) New employees would also be given the list so that they know what training they would receive. It would be up to the supervisor to determine who would deliver the instruction, likely the supervisor or someone else in the office assigned the task. The list of skills was simple enough that it should not take much time or expertise to administer the training.

With the "First Day at Work" training, other informal training from colleagues, and the technology support system we have in place, the TTG believed that new employees could "survive" technologically until they attended the second component of our program, The New Hire Training Day (NHTD). Scheduled the fourth Friday of each month, the NHTD was designed primarily to take new hires a little beyond the basics they learned initially. We identified the key applications that all new hires are likely to use and NCC staff or faculty who could effectively present these topics. Presenters were drawn from librarians, network administrators, faculty and the executive assistant to the president. We developed the following schedule for our first NHTD this past fall:

8:15 - 8:30	Welcome / Coffee
8:30 - 9:15	"Advanced" phone training
9:15 - 10:00	Network / file management
10:00 - 10:15	BREAK / QUESTIONS
10:15 - 10:45	"Advanced" cc:Mail
10:45 - 11:15	Netscape / Internet
11:15 - 11:45	Faxing / Miscellaneous / Tutorials
11:45 - 12:00	"Playtime" / Questions
12:00 - 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 - 2:00	Word (a little beyond the basics)
2:00 - 2:15	BREAK
2:15 - 3:15	Word (Special Topic - Mail Merge)

A great deal of flexibility was built into the schedule. For example, because we would be using in-house presenters, we could more easily adjust the schedule. After the first NHTD, we recognized that only 30 minutes were needed for the phone training and more time was added to the important explanations of network basics and file management. Similarly, sufficient "fudge time" was included to allow presenters to run over when necessary.

Because anywhere from zero to eight new staff were hired each month, we had the flexibility to allow current faculty and staff to fill the remaining seats in our training lab with ten PC's. After new hires had RSVP'd, an e-mail message would be sent to other employees inviting them to sign up for one or more sessions. Faculty and staff could select which session(s) would best suit their needs. Similarly, although new hires would be encouraged to attend all the sessions designed for them, the new hires might only attend a few because of prior experience or the nature of their work. Or, for a variety of reasons, a new employee might skip that month's NHTD and attend the following month.

The sessions from 8:15 - 2:00 were specifically designed for the new employee. After an introduction and welcome, new hires would be given hands-on training on several applications, with some time to practice. Lunch would also be provided. One of the presenters and I would normally attend lunch to answer questions, learn more about the new employees and further welcome them to the college.

More specialized topics were planned for the afternoon with the current employees in mind. This format would allow us to rotate different topics across the year responding to training needs.

As a final stage of welcome and transition for the new employee, we developed a New Hire Orientation Day. Once a new hire has a chance to become acclimated to the college and the job, we sought to further cement the bond with a formal welcome from key personnel and a tour of the campus. Specifically, we planned the following agenda:

8:15 am	Introductions
8:30 am	President Wilde will welcome attendees
8:45 am	Mike Moser (Director of Alumni Relations) will give a brief history of NCC
9:05 am	Showing of "A Direction For Life" -- a video used by Admissions to describe the college
9:25 am	Laurie Hamen (Associate Dean of Students) will speak briefly about the role we all play interacting with students
9:45 am	BREAK
10:00 am	Tour of campus -- staff people in each of the key offices will describe what faculty and staff need to know about their offices and how their offices relate to students
12:00 pm	LUNCH

Many current employees report being unfamiliar with other offices and their functions at the college. Consequently, we included a tour in the orientation day, but we designed it so that the tour would stop at key offices on campus for additional information. Moreover, instead of having the tour guides deliver descriptions of office functions, personnel within each of the designated offices would describe the role their office played at the college.

Finally, we sought and received institutional support from the top administration and supervisors across campus for the New Hire Training Program. Everyone involved was enthusiastic about the plan and its prospects for improving productivity and staff retention.

Implementation

Because several new employees had been hired in the fall while we were planning the program, we wanted to set up and pilot a New Hire Training Day quickly so these new employees would not be left behind. Thus, we began implementation of the program with the second component in late fall. Using the schedule listed above, we had no difficulty filling the ten seats for each session with a mixture of old and new staff and faculty. (A waiting list was also maintained to determine the level of interest for the different topics.) Follow-up calls were made to the few new hires who failed to sign up for the day. They typically reported that previous work experience prepared them sufficiently to use the applications on our network. Binders were prepared for each new hire that included instructions and quick tips on each of the applications covered. The new employees took the binders with them as a resource and to add to them as new quick tip sheets were prepared.

We offered a second NHTD in December with only a couple modifications. We shortened the phone training and lengthened network basics to reflect the actual time necessary to address the topics. We also added another special topic after mail-merge -- using Excel as a gradebook for faculty.

Three additional NHTD's have been offered this year to new and old staff and faculty. Training days in February and April were canceled because so few new staff were hired those months. The remaining days were sufficient to handle demand for the training.

While the new hire portion of these days remained the same (8:30-2:00), we changed the special sessions offered in the afternoons for current employees. After demand had been met for mail merge

in the first two days, we switched the Word topic to templates. We also added FERPA training and web page development (HotMetal Pro 3.0) to our offerings.

After the TTG got a few training days under its belt, we began implementing the First Day of Work for each new staff person hired by working with the respective supervisor. Some supervisors went further by customizing the First Day of Work list for their offices.

Finally, we offered our first New Hire Orientation Day this spring to all employees hired since January, 1996. Most new employees attended and welcomed the conversation, exposure to the wider campus, and pertinent information to their work.

Results

By all accounts, the New Hire Training Program has been an early success. Feedback sheets sent to participants about a week after the sessions revealed consistent appreciation for the new program. We received comments such as:

> "Every part of the training was excellent and valuable to my job. I would not change the class in any way except to maybe have more time in the workshops."
>
> "It is a very valuable tool to the new employee. It helps answer those questions you have plus knowledge on things that you didn't know existed. Shows how everything on campus can work. Thank you!"
>
> "It is very valuable to learn from someone who has worked in the same environment as I work and knows some of the problems I face and has suggestions for how to do the tasks I need to do."
>
> "It was a wonderful day. Recently being hired that same week, a lot was so new and have not used yet. Now when I see or hear it, I have some background knowledge. I would not change anything."
>
> "I was so impressed that NCC would offer these seminars that were so knowledgeable in all areas. Each presenter did a great job. Thank you for this beneficial day!"

Generally, new and old employees were thankful for this opportunity to be able to put their work aside for a short time so that they could be more productive in that work when they returned to it. All the sessions were flexible enough to handle the specific questions employees came with as well as to provide direct instruction and practice on new skills. Presenters were also pleased with what they were able to deliver in this format and what they saw the new and old employees learn. As fellow employees, the presenters really enjoyed sharing their expertise. For the executive assistant to the president, for example, this opportunity allowed her to contribute in a manner that was not part of her regular job description. Supervisors have also been very supportive. They have encouraged their staff to attend one or more of the sessions, leaving that decision to the employee.

What we have learned

Along with the praise for the New Hire Training Program, we also received some good suggestions for improvements. Slight modifications of the schedule were made to more accurately align the topics with the length of time assigned them. Specific topics have been suggested for future training. More special sessions on advanced topics will be added in the future as current employees become more and more comfortable with the basics, and as new employees enter with greater technological knowledge. In fact, as fewer and fewer current employees need the training we are offering the new hires, we may soon abandon the format of the New Hire Training Day for something even more flexible.

Through all of our training and support efforts we have learned that a "training the trainers" model is quite useful. We occasionally bring an outside expert onto campus to provide some more advanced training to certain dedicated users, with the understanding that those users will share their expertise in some manner. They may serve as workshop trainers, make house calls to offices or just be "on call" to answer telephone or e-mail questions. For example, we have created a page on our Intranet entitled "Whom Can I Call?" Listed there are names of faculty and staff associated with specific network applications who are willing to answer questions about that program.

Most of all, we have learned that new employees appreciate joining an organization that supports them, is interested in them, and looks to find ways to assist them to perform their work more effectively. The good will the program has created among the developers and the participants has been its most significant contribution so far.

Appendix A

New Employee Technology Training Checklist for Supervisors

The purpose of this checklist is to identify basic technology skills that all new employees should learn within their first three days on the job. The expectation is that the employee's supervisor or a co-worker will show the employee these skills. Other skills will of course be required by the employee depending on the position he/she holds, but these basic skills are applicable to all employees.

The first four categories are important to every employee as the telephone and e-mail are essential tools for communication at the College. The last two categories are important to all clerical and administrative staff and to faculty.

At the end of the third day of work at the college, new employees should be able to:

I. Network Skills:
Log into the network
Log out of the network completely (don't just turn off the PC)
Change their network password
Know where their network "home" directory is
Know where "group" ("N:") drive files that are used by their office are

II. cc:Mail:
Log into cc:Mail
Set their initial cc:Mail password (the first thing typed in the "password" field becomes the password)
Change their cc:Mail password
Read their incoming mail
Reply to a message
Send a message to an on-campus address
Send a message to an Internet address
Know their own Internet address ("xxxxxxx@noctrl.edu")

III. Telephone:
Access their voice mail
Change their password on voice mail
Record their personal greeting
Transfer someone
Put someone on hold

IV. Where to get help with technology:
Know where network tutorials are and how to start them
Know where paper documentation on technology is kept in their office
Know the Help Desk telephone number
Know how to send e-mail to the Help Desk

V. Word:
Know how to start Word
Know how to start a document
Know how to save a document
Know how to retrieve a document previously saved

VI. Datatel:
(This will vary extensively from office to office but there are a few basics)
Log into Sequent/Datatel
Change their password
Start appropriate modules
Log out of Datatel/Sequent